Rome 7th December 1774
my 81st birth day

My dear Tom

you wrote me such a capital letter that I'm filled with ~~jealousy~~ jealousy & am in a dead fix as to how I can come up to the scratch, if I can come up to it at all?

You say very truly that we have

~~on[illegible]~~, to be quite content with all & every thing. - But I did not rail at my fortune but at mine enemies, but I have been under a great mistake, for I have always thought that doing good & kind things would insure me kind treatment, - but 'tis just the contrary & I had to begin over again I'd be such a Brute, indeed I dont know but what I may be studying it now - for at the sight of a wild boar the other day

I said "blow me tight" that's the jockey for me, that's what I ought to imitate
8th I would not allow my good friend the Doctor & his Ladies to keep my birth day, for 'tis sad that all my old friends are dead & gone & I cannot bear to rejoice without them, yet as good luck would have it, just then arrived young Willie Richmond & his wife - he is unto me like my son for his father & I have been like brothers & so he dinner was got up & was very pleasant - with two young Italian ladies, we were 8 in all & Mr. Valeriani was very joyous & I was pronounced to be a fine specimen of Roman Antiquities, but we'll "let that fly stick to the wall" 'tis enough that I am "bobbish" & am painting to my hearts delight being now in my 4th picture

I dread the cold winter & the long evenings when I can do nothing but keep the fire warm for I am a very chilly sort body

What a shave up my illustrious friend Wm Gladstone has made in his pamphlet on the Vatican & the Pope whom he has shut up like a telescope to open again in due time for there's no end to him, but Gladstone has given him a facer - I had to pay double for the book 5 sh! !!!

I see you've pitched into your foggy winter at last - Maria says you do without any bellows! & that old joke no longer holds good of the roses blowing - We had one real cold day with a north wind like a two edged sword but I dare not face it & I suffer so from any cold that I should make a poor turn out in England - there I am very comfortable tho' I have but few visitors

I am often thinking of Egypt & my Walter & his wife meeting the Andersons without any anticipation, this was one of the most romantic incidents I ever knew & so pleasant to all parties - what a clever chap Anderson must be & now I will hope that he will make a fine fortune

In my cabbing I am obliged to pick up any friend, male or female lest I should have some mishap & be upset, but so far I have been always well to do - My scanty income just covers all my expenditure to a farthing

Poor Charleys life must be harrassing in the extreem, so late at night & such hard work I'll write him in Italian one of these ev^gs - for I am writing this at night - my supper is at 8. & consists of 3 stew'd apples

Thats well soon be here & how will I remember it at Masons Court for my father was always very merry & would have us all merry like himself - God bless you for all your kindness to your loving brother Joe